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From the Land

"The Jewel in the Crown of Weston"

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The Lachat property, Weston

Devil's Den and the town of Weston have entered a partnership hailed by Nature Conservancy President John C. Sawhill as exemplifying community-based conservation.

In a move that will dramatically increase the quality of each visitor's experience at The Den, the Conservancy's largest contiguous preserve in the state, the preserve and the town have agreed to purchase jointly 42 acres adjacent to The Den, and create a conservation center on the site.

"This is the jewel in the crown of Weston," First Selectman George

C. Guidera said of the woods and fields owned by Leon Lachat, which comprise what is possibly the most scenic unprotected tract in Weston.

The property is one of the few in Weston maintained as open grassland, a fast disappearing habitat in southern New England. It also adds significantly to The Den's most important ecological feature, its extensive 1,746 acres of deciduous forest, and adds protection to the West Branch of the Saugatuck River, one of Fairfield County's most pristine waterways. The property includes a historic residence, barn, and outbuildings, and is one of the few sites in Weston that still reflects the town's agricultural history.

The agreement came about thanks to Mark Harper, a lifelong resident of Weston and close friend of Leon Lachat, who brought Lachat, the town and the Conservancy

together to discuss the project. Lachat has agreed to sell his property at far below its market value, offering the first piece of 32 acres, including the buildings, for just \$1.5 million.

Lachat has also granted the town and the Conservancy a three-year option to purchase the remaining 10 acres of his property for \$1 million, also well below market value. This tract features an expanse of high fields with magnificent views to the south and west.

"Our new project with the town is an excellent example of the Conservancy's community-based approach to conservation," said Dr.

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SPRING 1998

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Greater than the Sum of Our Parts

Over the past few months, the Connecticut Chapter has been able to participate in larger projects than ever before possible. How have we been able to do this? Through the development of creative partnerships with various individuals and organizations.

As open land becomes more scarce and development pressures grow, it will become ever more difficult for any single organization, acting alone, to make significant strides in conservation. The law of supply and demand drives prices up, negotiations become more complicated, and the time to act grows shorter. Combine these factors with an increasing rate of species extinction, and the number of species The Nature Conservancy will be able to protect becomes fewer and fewer.

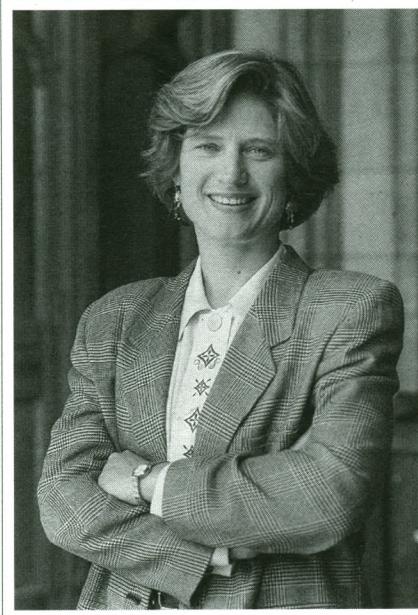
Fortunately, The Nature Conservancy need not work alone. By combining our efforts with those of other private groups, individuals, and government agencies, we can all reach our common goal of protecting land and species. Together, we're greater than the sum of our parts.

A great example of what these partnerships can accomplish is the recent purchase of the Lachat property at The Den. The high cost of real estate in mid-Fairfield County made the protection costs of the Lachat property prohibitive for either the Conservancy or the town of Weston. By working together, both organizations were able to accomplish the protection of the land while sharing the financial burden. Without the partnership, this scenic and

historic site would most surely have been lost to subdivision. The partnership also enables The Den to expand its educational programs for residents of Weston and greater Fairfield County.

Just as partnering was the key to our success at The Den, we are pleased to have contributed to land conservation on the state level through another partnering experience. It was an honor for me to serve

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alongside chapter Trustee Diana Atwood Johnson on Governor John Rowland's Blue Ribbon Task Force for Open Space. This committee was a rare opportunity for environmentalists and business leaders to join together and find ways to support conservation throughout the state. As

Governor Rowland has pointed out, the business leaders on the task force were extremely aggressive in recommending funding for open space purchases. It is very heartening that these entrepreneurs recognize that protecting natural area is good business.

The result of the Task Force's work is that Governor Rowland has proposed to spend \$166 million for open space purchases. This bold proposal by the Governor will have an impact on Connecticut's landscape for generations to come. Neither the Conservancy nor any other private group could have hoped to marshal such sums of money for land conservation. The Governor deserves the highest commendation for recognizing the importance of taking action on this issue today.

As we begin protection efforts in larger areas such as the Tidelands of the Connecticut River and the northwest corner of the state, positive partnerships like these mentioned will be essential for our success. While there is a lot of protection work we can perform on our own, partnerships with individuals, businesses, government agencies, and other environmental organizations will enable us to protect larger areas of land. I am looking forward to establishing new relationships centered around a common goal: preserving the environmental health and prosperity of our state. 

— DENISE SCHLENER,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY AT WORK

	National	Connecticut
TOTAL TRANSACTIONS:	18,848	676
TOTAL ACRES PROTECTED:	10,235,000	21,618
MEMBERS:	821,276	18,325
CORPORATE ASSOCIATES:	1,900	34

The Campaign for The Den

Preserve Launches \$5 Million Campaign

Launching the first capital campaign of its history, and challenging its many supporters across Fairfield County and beyond, the Devil's Den Preserve has announced a \$5 million fund-raising goal.

Devil's Den Director Dr. Stephen Patton announced the campaign at a cocktail reception, generously underwritten by General Motors Corporation, at the Weston residence of Helen and David Jaffe to celebrate the preserve's 30th anniversary. The funds will go toward The Den's joint project with the town of Weston to purchase the 42-acre Lachat property and create a conservation center, and to establish crucial endowment funds for The Den's conservation and education programs.

Devil's Den Preserve was created by Weston resident Katharine Ordway through a series of donations totaling 1,300 acres from 1966 through 1968, beginning with a then-unheard-of donation of \$700,000 for the first 1,200-acre purchase from the Bridgeport Hydraulic Company. Today, The Den totals 1,746 acres, and offers important recreational opportunities to more than 40,000 visitors every year.

Goals of the Campaign for The Den

Juliana Lachat Tract and Conservation Center	\$2,750,000
Endowment for Conservation Education	\$500,000
Endowment for Conservation Research	\$500,000
Land Preservation Fund	\$1,250,000
Total	\$5,000,000

The Campaign for The Den gives supporters and volunteers the opportunity to make substantial practical and programmatic improvements to The Den's facilities and resources. This is an excellent opportunity for individuals, foundations, and corporations to build on a documented, cooperative relationship with the town of Weston. The campaign will increase conservation, research, and education opportunities for the benefit of area students and visitors from across Connecticut and beyond. 

For more information on The Campaign for The Den, please contact the preserve office at (203) 226-4991.

With the Sierra pickup donated by General Motors are (left to right) Chapter Director Denise Schlerer; GM Executive Director of Worldwide Executive Compensation and Den Preserve Committee member Gregory Lau; Chapter Chair of Capital Gifts Joanne Woodward; GM Public Policy Center Vice President Dennis Minano; Conservancy President John Sawhill; and Den Director Stephen Patton.

GM Donates Sierra Pickup to Den

In a vital and long-lasting gesture of support, General Motors Corporation has donated a GMC Sierra truck to Devil's Den Preserve.

Dennis R. Minano, GM vice president, Public Policy Center, presented the keys to the pickup to Den Director Dr. Stephen Patton at a March 12 reception celebrating The Den's 30th anniversary at the home of Helen and David Jaffe, vice chair of the Preserve Committee.

"The Nature Conservancy is committed to a non-confrontational, market-oriented approach to conservation," said Minano of the Detroit-based car company's five-year relationship with the national environmental group, adding that GM employees have gained important environmental knowledge from the relationship. "In the long run, environmental success is essential to business success ... and our customers want us to be environmentally responsible."

Minano thanked Westport resident and Den Preserve Committee member, Greg Lau, who is GM's executive director of Worldwide Executive Compensation and Corporate Governance, for bringing The Den's need of a truck to the company's attention.

General Motors has donated almost 60 trucks to Conservancy chapters and preserves in 41 states, from Maine to Hawaii, as well as to Conservancy projects in Mexico, the Solomon Islands, the Virgin Islands, and South and Central America. 



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Devil's Den Celebrates 30th Anniversary General Motors Sponsors Reception at the Home of David



Host David Jaffe, vice-chair of the Devil's Den Preserve Committee, addresses his guests.

Nature Conservancy President John Sawhill (left) with Jim Finn of GM.



Peter Chingos, Den Committee member Gregory Lau, Paul and Cathy Novas.



Dan and Maureen Aron.



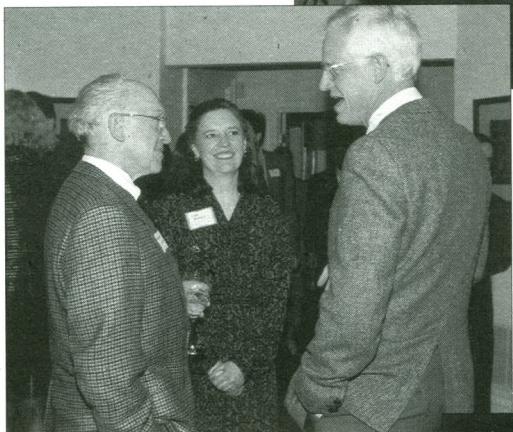
David Jaffe, vice-chair of the Devil's Den Preserve Committee, with fellow Den Committee member Allen Noveck.

and Kicks Off Campaign and Helen Jaffe in Weston



Chapter Director Denise Schlener, hostess Helen Jaffe, Chapter Director of Government Relations David Sutherland and Den Director Dr. Stephen Patton.

Elsie and Dr. Peter Patton,
a chapter board member,
with Nature Conservancy
President John Sawhill.



Longtime Den supporter Andrew Neilly
(left) with Den Assistant Director Dr. Lise
Hanners and Chapter Board Chair
Anthony Grassi.



Joanne Woodward with GM Public
Policy Center Vice President Dennis
Minano and Marcia McGee of GM.



Den Preserve Committee Chair
Ronald Jeitz, Vice Chair David Jaffe,
and committee member W. Wilson
Lowery Jr.

United Technologies Vice President
for Environment, Health and Safety
Leslie Carothers and Chapter Board
Chair Anthony Grassi.

All photos © Erik Trautmann

The Greenfield Challenge

Stu Greenfield believes we can accomplish a lot together—especially when it comes to protecting land. The Westport resident and chapter trustee has challenged fellow Conservancy supporters: he will match each gift toward the Lachat purchase dollar-for-dollar up to \$250,000. This gift not only represents a giant leap forward in the chapter's fundraising for this project, but focuses attention on it as a high priority.

"Devil's Den is a wonderful resource for the people of Fairfield County," Greenfield said. "It is a great expanse of rugged terrain, with over 20 miles of hiking paths. The Lachat acquisition will not only add acreage to the preserve, but also improve accessibility and provide space for an enhanced conservation education program. I anticipate many future generations will benefit from the preservation of this property, and The Den's value to the community will continue to grow with southwestern Connecticut's increasing urbanization."

If you are interested in meeting Greenfield's challenge, please call Devil's Den Director Dr. Stephen Patton at (203) 226-4991. 

Jaffes Pledge \$350,000 to Den and International Program

David and Helen Jaffe of Weston have pledged \$100,000 toward the Campaign for The Den, and \$250,000 toward the Conservancy's International Program.

David Jaffe is vice chair of the Devil's Den Preserve Committee, of which he has been a member for three years. The Jaffes hosted the March 12 reception celebrating The Den's 30th anniversary.

"We're delighted to be able to support The Den and the exciting things happening there," said David Jaffe. "Including the partnership with the town, the purchase of the Lachat property, the development of a conservation center, as well as increased programs and activities."

The Jaffes' contribution toward the International Program will go toward land conservation in the Sierra Nevada De Santa Marta National Park in Colombia; which has been identified as one of the most biologically rich places on Earth. 

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*The Lachat property,
Weston*

Weston's Crown Jewel

(continued from page 1)

Stephen Patton, director of Devil's Den Preserve. "Acquisition of the Lachat property takes us to a new level as we build on an existing partnership with the town of Weston to achieve something we have considered a priority for many years."

The selectmen of Weston and the Conservancy signed a cooperative agreement that could serve as a model for future conservation activities by the Conservancy and other municipalities. Under the terms of this agreement, the

Conservancy and town will share equally in the cost of renovation and construction of a conservation center on the property. As Leon Lachat requested, the center will be named after his mother, Juliana Lachat.

Under the terms of the contract, the Conservancy and the town will share equally

in the cost of the property, will be joint owners of the property, and will exchange conservation easements over each other's interest in the property, further ensuring its perpetual protection as a natural area.

Because Lachat has also been granted a life estate on the property, there will be no public use of the property in the immediate future.

The town will provide capital maintenance for the buildings on the property. The Conservancy will take responsibility for conservation

programming including education, research and public outreach. The Conservancy will continue to work with the town to offer educational and research opportunities for the Weston School System and other towns in the region. 



"Our new project with the town is an excellent example of the Conservancy's community-based approach to conservation. Acquisition of the Lachat property takes us to a new level as we build on an existing partnership with the town of Weston to achieve something we have considered a priority for many years."

DR. STEPHEN PATTON

On Devil's Den

Melissa Newman

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Devil's Den, Joanne Woodward, the Connecticut Chapter's chair of capital gifts, introduced her daughter Melissa Newman, who delivered the following address.

Weston, Connecticut
March 12, 1998

I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK FOR A MINUTE ABOUT THE ALTRUISTIC SPIRIT THAT MAKES A GIFT OF LAND POSSIBLE.

PEOPLE LIKE KATHARINE ORDWAY AND THE OTHERS WHO MADE AND CONTINUE TO MAKE DEVIL'S DEN A REALITY UNDERSTOOD THE BLESSING OF HAVING "ENOUGH." ENOUGH MONEY FOR COMFORT, ENOUGH LAND FOR WHATEVER PRIVACY THEY FELT THEY NEEDED, AND INSTEAD OF TURNING THE SURPLUS OF THEIR BLESSING INTO PERSONAL GAIN, THEY CHOSE TO CREATE A SELFLESS GIFT—A GIFT TO THE EARTH AND ALL OF THE PEOPLE ON IT; FOR THIS IS POTENTIALLY WHAT A GIFT OF LAND IS.

A GIFT OF LAND IS POTENTIALLY A GIFT TO ANY PERSON WHO CAN GET THERE TO BE THERE.

IT IS A GIFT TO THE EARTH IN THAT IT SAVES A TINY PIECE OF IT IN THE MANNER IN WHICH IT WAS CREATED: UNPAVED, UNPLOWED, UN-"GROOMED," A LITTLE BREATHING HOLE IN THE SKY.

IT IS A TRAJECTORY INTO THE FUTURE, A PIECE OF "NATURAL HISTORY"—IN THE TRUEST SENSE—FOR OUR CHILDREN, AND THEIR CHILDREN, A LIVING SCRAPBOOK OF THE SURROUNDINGS THAT MANY OF US HAVE ALWAYS APPRECIATED.

IT IS A CLASSROOM THAT TEACHES, WITHOUT MULTICOLORED PLASTIC PARTS OR A MOTOR OR A MONITOR OR A JOYSTICK, THE EXCITEMENT OF JUST BEING SOMEWHERE, FORMING THOUGHTS AND CREATING THINGS AND IDEAS IN AN ENVIRONMENT UNCLOUDED BY HUMAN IMPRINT. THAT IS PURE THINKING.

AND, SADLY, IT IS POTENTIALLY A MUSEUM, A PROTECTED TRIBUTE TO SOMETHING THAT IS SO RAPIDLY DISAPPEARING.

THE PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT DEVIL'S DEN MAKE ALL OF THESE FACETS POSSIBLE, AND SHOULD BE COMMENDED FOR THE MOST SOULFUL KIND OF GENEROSITY.

SUCH A BROAD AND UNBOUNDED GIFT ENGENDERS RESPONSIBILITIES, AS WE KNOW, AND I WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THESE AS WELL.



Melissa Newman, second from right, with Marlitt Dellabough, Joanne Woodward, and Raphael Elkind.

FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT, IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ENJOY IT, AND CONSTANTLY TO CREATE WAYS FOR OTHERS TO ENJOY IT. HIKE THERE, BRING PEOPLE WITH YOU, TAKE PEOPLE FOR WALKS WHO WOULD NEVER THINK OF WALKING, RAISE YOUR CHILDREN THERE, START THEM IN BACKPACKS AND GO FROM THERE. THEY WON'T KNOW ABOUT IT UNLESS YOU SHOW THEM.

SUPPORT THE NATURE CONSERVANCY IN ITS WORK TO MAINTAIN PLACES LIKE DEVIL'S DEN, AND TO CREATE NEW ONES. THIS WORK IS NEVER DONE, AND THE CLOCK IS TICKING ON IT.

REMEMBER WHAT A VERY VAST GIFT YOU CONTRIBUTE TO. THANK YOU. 

Eightmile River: A Community-Based Collaboration

Miraculously, after 350 years of settlement, 80 percent of the watershed of the Eightmile River today is forested. These 62 square miles drain to scenic and historic Hamburg Cove in Lyme, eight miles from the mouth of the Connecticut River, which is the origin of the river's name.

Hamburg Cove is home to significant tidal marshes and several rare plants and animals, and is one of the key sites in The Nature Conservancy's Tidelands of the Connecticut River program. The Conservancy designated the region one of the Last Great Places in 1993.

The Conservancy is a partner in the Eightmile River Watershed Project, an effort to balance conservation and growth in the watershed in ways that ensure the long term social, economic, and environmental health of its communities. The project is currently compiling information on the Eightmile River watershed on a geographic information system for use by local officials and property owners.

Last November, first selectmen from East Haddam, Lyme and Salem signed the Eightmile River Watershed Conservation Compact, a non-binding cooperative agreement that underscores the towns' commitment to work together to protect their natural and cultural heritage.

Collaborators in the Eightmile River Watershed Project:

The Nature Conservancy

The towns of East Haddam, Lyme and Salem

University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Water Quality Initiative of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service. 

Owner of Historic Bed & Breakfast Donates Easement

Wearly travelers can rest easy at the historic Woodbridge Farm Bed & Breakfast in Salem, knowing the inn's owner has helped protect one of the Last Great Places.

Owner Marian Bingham has donated conservation easements on a total of 119 acres adjacent to the Burnham Brook Preserve in Salem.

Last December, she donated a conservation easement on 39 adjacent acres to the Connecticut Chapter. This land is contiguous to 80 acres on which she donated a conservation easement a year ago. The entire area lies in the watershed of Burnham Brook, a tributary of the Eightmile River, which meets the Connecticut River at Hamburg Cove (Please see Eightmile River, at left).

The land lies on both sides of Woodbridge Road where it meets Route 82. The easement does not include the historic bed and breakfast and other buildings, or a 2.8-acre building lot. The Woodbridge Farm Bed & Breakfast was recently certified by the National Register of Historic Places.

The 80-acre easement property abuts the eastern corner of the chapter's Burnham Brook Preserve. Together, the easements add 119 acres to the significant corridor of protected land in the area, including the 1,000-acre Devil's Hopyard State Park. The

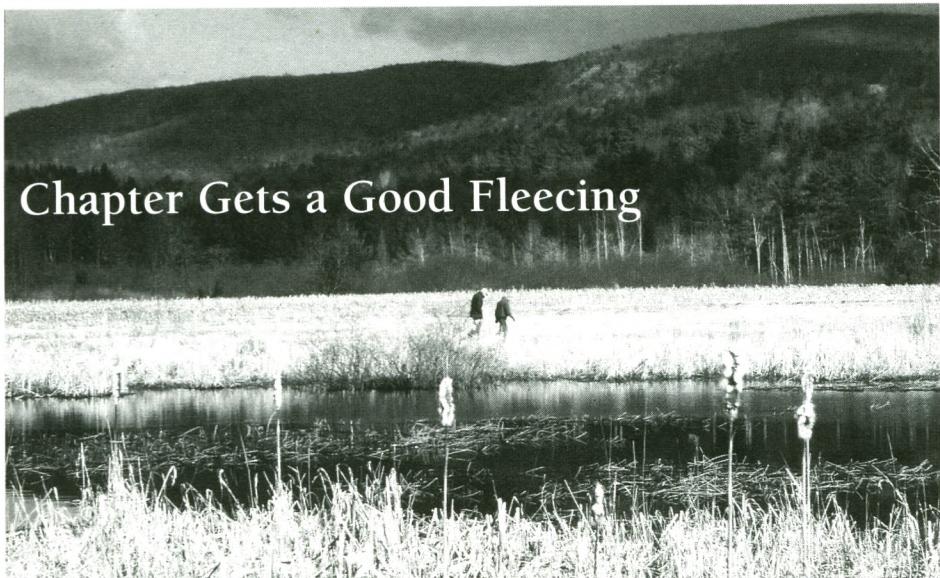
Burnham Brook Preserve now totals 1,003 acres with 764 acres owned outright and 239 acres protected through conservation easements.

"Once again, Marian Bingham has demonstrated creativity and leadership in her support of the Conservancy," said Chapter Executive Director Denise Schlener. "With this valuable easement, she is contributing to a healthy environment and a beautiful natural landscape. I know she'll inspire others to do the same." 

A conservation easement—in Connecticut technically called a conservation restriction— is a permanent legal agreement a property owner makes to restrict the type and amount of development that may take place on a specific piece of property.



Eightmile River.



Chapter Gets a Good Fleecing

Katherine L. and William J. Schrenk Jr. on their property in Falls Village.

A herd of sheep and their generous owners have stampeded to the rescue in Falls Village, and helped protect the water quality of Connecticut's largest inland wetland.

William J. Schrenk Jr. and Katherine L. Schrenk donated a 346-acre easement on Beavertides Farm, which they have owned for 30 years. The Schrenks and their farm managers, Chris and Eileen Kinsella, raise a variety of animals on the farm, including about 75 sheep for fleece.

"We wish to do our bit to protect this wonderful valley, and to keep the pastures and tillable acres in agricultural use," the Schrenks said. "We are also pleased to help protect the water quality of Robbins Swamp." At approximately 1,000 acres, Robbins Swamp is Connecticut's largest inland wetland and one of the state's most important conservation sites.

Wangum Lake Brook flows for about a mile through the Schrenk land. The brook runs from Wangum Lake on Canaan Mountain to the southern end of Robbins Swamp, where it meets the Hollenbeck River, a tributary of the Housatonic River. The wetland around it is calcareous, meaning it is based on limestone. Many unusual plants specialize in

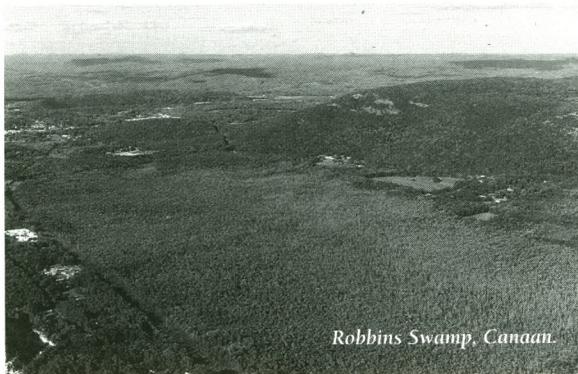
calcareous habitats, and this area is known for its concentration of rare plants, animals, and natural communities.

"This connection between Wangum Lake and Robbins Swamp is vital," said Chapter Director Denise Schlener. "We're fortunate Bill and Kay Schrenk recognize that, and are willing to help us protect this linkage."

The Schrenk easement restricts the use of their property to agricultural and limited residential purposes. The land includes wetlands, forested uplands, rocky slopes, pastures currently used for sheep, hay fields and several barns. There are two existing residences on the property.

The chapter is working to raise \$82,417 to cover closing costs and create a stewardship endowment so that it can ensure the terms of the easement are met in the years ahead. 

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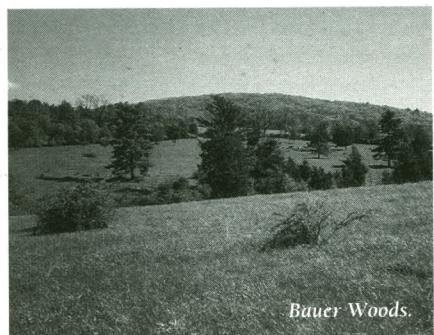
Robbins Swamp, Canaan.

Bauer Power

Protected from development through a conservation easement 14 years ago, Bauer Woods Preserve in Salisbury remains a key conservation site in northwest Connecticut. Today, it is the chapter's newest owned property in the region.

A calcareous fen (see page 11) bordered by hills, the 60-acre preserve is home to a variety of wildlife and at least 10 rare plants, including a sedge—a coarse, grass-like plant that grows in wet ground—that is rare worldwide.

Last year the estate of the late Bettina



Bauer Woods.

B. Verbeck, which originally granted the easement in 1983, transferred ownership of the land to the Conservancy. The preserve, which was formerly part of Larchmeadow Farm, was named in honor of Bettina Verbeck's mother, Ruth R. Bauer.

Although the easement protected the property from development, and the Conservancy was permitted access to the land for work parties and scientific research, ownership of the land enhances the chapter's ability to manage it.

"As owners of the preserve, we can take a long-range view of this property, and systematically plan for its stewardship," said Judy Preston, chapter director of science and stewardship. One of the major challenges at the site is controlling invasive plants, such as shrub honeysuckle, garlic mustard and common reed (*Phragmites australis*) (see page 13). 

Chapter Founder Donates Home and 21 Acres

A Pledge to Protect the Tidelands

Dorinda and Mark Winkelman of Essex understand that beautiful and thriving natural areas are what make the Tidelands of the Connecticut River one of the Last Great Places. They have also turned that understanding into action by pledging \$250,000 over five years to protect those areas.

"The Winkelmans' generous donation will make it possible for the chapter to take quick action when we have an opportunity to protect land in this area," said Chapter Director Denise Schlener. "We're lucky to have people like Dorinda and Mark Winkelman on our side. They've not only helped us directly, but have also shown exceptional leadership."

The Winkelmans live next to one of the key sites in the Tidelands of the Connecticut River region. The 89-acre Turtle Creek Preserve includes a freshwater tidal system with a channel containing a variety of aquatic plants, including wild rice, an important food source for migrating waterfowl.

"We're fortunate to live in the midst of the natural beauty of this region, where we can watch the wildlife come and go and the landscape change through the seasons," said Dorinda Winkelman. "It's something our whole family cherishes, and we're pleased to help protect it, so future generations can enjoy it as we have."



Gov. John G. Rowland (center) on Jan. 29 announced his proposal to commit more than \$160 million over the next five years to protect open space in Connecticut. The Governor's proposal was a response to recommendations from his 15-person Blue Ribbon Task Force on Open Space, of which Chapter Director Denise Schlener (far left) served, along with State Sen. James Fleming of Simsbury, Rep. Jessie G. Stratton of Canton, and William Ethier, executive director of the Homebuilders Association of Connecticut (left to right, behind Rowland).

Almost four decades after founding The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter, Dr. Richard Goodwin in January made one of his most significant contributions to the organization: he donated his home.

Dr. Richard H. and Esther B. Goodwin of East Haddam conveyed their house, two other buildings and 21 acres at Dolbia Hill Farm to the organization he and a group of like-minded conservationists founded in 1960. The terms of the donation include a provision that the Goodwins may continue to live on the property, which lies at the heart of the Burnham Brook Preserve, for their lifetimes.

This donation brings the preserve to a total of 1,003 acres owned or with conservation easements held by The Nature Conservancy, more than a third of which were donated by the Goodwins. The Burnham Brook Preserve was one of the chapter's first, established in 1960 by a gift of 46 acres from Dr. Goodwin and Dr. John M. Ide. Since 1960 Dick and Esther Goodwin have donated a total of 324 acres to the Burnham Brook Preserve, one of the largest legally protected areas of unfragmented forest in the state.

"The legacy of Dick and Esther Goodwin cannot be captured in a few words," said Denise Schlener, executive director of The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter. "Dick Goodwin is one of the founders of the chapter, and shares responsibility for everything we've accomplished. His skills as a negotiator on behalf of the environment are legendary. Dick and Esther have contributed land, they've contributed funds, and they've inspired others to follow their example. Perhaps most important, they've provided leadership and vision, a model for conservation that will lead us into the 21st century."

The Burnham Brook Preserve protects the watershed of the Eightmile River, a well-known trout stream that meets the Connecticut River at Hamburg Cove in Lyme. The preserve is named for a cold, fast-moving stream that empties into the Eightmile River. *



Former chapter trustee Evan Griswold, Esther and Dr. Richard Goodwin, and Director of Science & Stewardship Judy Preston on the day of the Goodwins's most recent donation to the Conservancy.

Fens In High Places

In Connecticut's northwest highlands, one of the most important natural communities is the fen. You often hear the words bog and fen used interchangeably; both are wetlands, also referred to as peatlands. It is important to distinguish the two, and the fundamental difference between a bog and a fen is the difference in nutrient levels.

Bogs are closed systems without a primary inlet or outlet of water, and therefore have limited nutrient input and flushing. These most acid of peatlands receive their nutrients predominantly from the atmosphere: rain, fog or snow, with little or no influence from groundwater or surface runoff. This source of water has not been "fertilized" by nutrients and minerals that would be picked up by its percolation through soil and rocks. Bogs often are wetlands originally formed in kettle ponds, where isolated blocks of glacial ice melted in place as the glacier retreated. Often, the primary vegetation in bogs consists of peat mosses of various Sphagnum species and ericaceous shrubs. These woody shrubs are the hallmark of bogs; and thrive in their nutrient-poor soil; they include cranberry, blueberry, leatherleaf, and rhododendron. Acidic bogs are also home to those unusual carnivorous plants, the pitcher plant and sundew.

Fens, on the other hand, while still considered peatlands, are nutrient-rich. These wetlands are fed by cold groundwater that either flows or seeps from rocks and soils that are derived from nutrient-rich limestone. Unlike bogs, fens are fed and flushed by these rich waters. In addition, minor seasonal fluctuations in water levels create an environment that is punctuated by drier periods, preventing the buildup of peat. Fens are generally open, with scattered trees, and vegetation that consists primarily of sedges, grasses, mosses and shrubs.

There are a number of variations of fens, including basin fens (or calcareous swamps), such as Robbins Swamp in Canaan; seepage calcareous fens that have open channels of faster-moving water and a thin or non-existent peat mat; and sloping or hillside fens



Benton Hill Fen.

that are intermediate forms influenced by a major stream with rare occurrences of flooding. Fens can further be classified by their substrate, or underlying soil, such as a marl fen; graminoid fen (with grass-based peat); rich, medium and poor fens that are degrees of mineral richness.

Why do we care?

Because of their restricted range and the fact that they are generally small in area, fens are a significant feature of the Connecticut landscape. In contrast to the more acid-based and relatively infertile soils of the rest of the state, limestone derived soils and wetlands are rich in calcium and magnesium. These areas, and particularly fen communities, support a diverse and often lush flora that in turn support a multitude of insect and wildlife species. Fens often harbor uncommon or rare plant and animal species that are restricted to this habitat. This is why The Nature Conservancy is particularly interested in the protection of fens in the northwest corner of the state.

Many of the immediate surroundings of fens are used for agriculture because of the rich and productive soils that result from the limestone rocks. Some of the potential threats from this land use include fertilizer run-off, erosion and sedimentation resulting from cattle tramping in wetlands, and conversion of natural fen communities into flooded ponds for farm use.

Where are fens in Connecticut?

Generally, fens are small and occur within the northwestern part of the state along the limestone valleys that extend in Connecticut from Salisbury and North Canaan south to Ridgefield. There are a number of high quality fens in Connecticut, including Beeslick Pond, Moore Brook and State Line Swamp, all in the town of Salisbury. The prospective acquisition of 575 acres in Canaan will help insure the protection of a significant portion of Robbins Swamp.

Calcareous fens in Connecticut's northwest highlands contribute substantially to the rich and diverse flora and fauna that characterize the biological diversity of Connecticut. Scientists, several of whom are supported in part by The Nature Conservancy's grants programs, continue to uncover species new to the state in the northwest corner, and we learn more every day about the rare and declining species that rely on the health of these unique systems. Fens are just one piece of the complex and interconnected landscape of the state's northwest corner, which will be a priority conservation area for the Conservancy in the coming years.

— JUDY PRESTON

© John Matthiessen

Chapter Director Denise Schlenker thanks Bill Reed for his dedication to Great Pond.



Wish List...

Chapter members have been very generous in lending and donating useful items to us. An in-kind donation may be tax-deductible; please consult your tax advisor. If you can donate any of the following items, please contact Preserve Steward Geoff Huit at the Connecticut Field Office; (860) 344-0716.

1. field cameras and film
2. measuring wheel
3. ArcView software:
 - a. Spatial Analyst for ArcView.
 - b. PresentTable software for ArcView.
4. two-way handheld radios (walkie-talkies for work parties, field work, etc.)
5. Peterson Field Guides:
#32, Atlantic Coast Fishes, by Robins, CR et al., 1986 ISBN 0-395-39198-9
#42, Freshwater Fishes, by Page, LM & BM Burr, 1991, ISBN 0-395-53933-1
6. soil chemistry kits - especially for nutrients
7. surveying equipment
8. palm-top field computers for data entry
9. increment borers (for determining the age of trees)
10. "Ecological Applications" (journal)

The Story of Great Pond

Great Pond in Glastonbury is a fascinating place for a number of reasons. Its water level fluctuates dramatically throughout the year, and it is on top of the state's second largest aquifer. The pond supports an interesting natural community, including 10 species of amphibians and two species of shrimp, and is a stopover point for a wide variety of migrating waterfowl and wading birds. Its mudflats are home to a variety of uncommon wildflowers and grasses, including five species of special concern. Both as a habitat and as a hydrological phenomenon, the area is of ongoing interest to scientists.

The area is also of interest to environmentalists as an example of what a committed group of people can accomplish. The area around the 12-acre pond faced extensive excavation by its owner, the Balf Company of Newington, but thanks to a group of Glastonbury residents headed by H. William "Bill" Reed, working in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy, today it is a town-owned nature preserve.

The four-year struggle to spare the area from the impact of intensive excavation began in 1987, when Balf purchased the last unexcavated land around the pond. The late Peter Stern, then chair of the town's Conservation Commission, contacted the Conservancy, and approached Balf with the idea of purchasing the land with town and state funds.

In 1988, when the company declined to sell, Dr. David Bodznick and Bill Reed formed a group called Friends of Great Pond. The 200-member group pursued a two-pronged effort, simultaneously building public support for protecting the pond by publicizing its beauty and ecological significance—but avoiding attacking the company—and

intervening in hearings on excavation plans, with the pro bono help of attorneys Mark Branse and John Glezen.

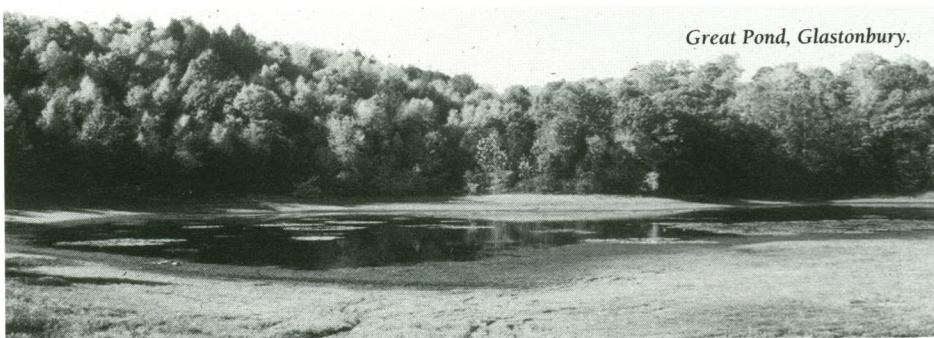
In January of 1990, the efforts of the group were rewarded: Balf agreed to modify its excavation plans to save key areas and donate 50 unexcavated acres to the town, adding to 19 acres it had donated earlier. The company also pledged \$50,000 for an endowment fund, if the Friends and the Conservancy raised an additional \$25,000. Friends of Great Pond then withdrew its opposition, and Balf has completed its reduced excavation.

A formal signing ceremony for Balf's donation of the land and agreement between the town and the Conservancy to jointly manage the preserve took place on December 12, 1991 at Glastonbury Town Hall. The preserve is managed by a local preserve committee working with Conservancy staff, and was officially opened last June.

The committee has posted preserve boundaries; built 800 feet of fence; designed, marked, and cut trails; published a preserve brochure; and sponsored scientific studies. Eagle Scout candidate Jeff Snyder has built an observation platform on the edge of the pond. The preserve still has its problems, including trail-shredding dirt-bikes, which are prohibited. Considering this unique place was once threatened by bulldozers, however, it seems miraculous that its beauty and natural abundance are intact.

"Our effort shows what a dedicated volunteer group can accomplish through perseverance and a non-confrontational approach," said Bill Reed. "It never could have happened without the help of the Conservancy and a strong local conservation commission."

© H. William Reed



Great Pond, Glastonbury.

The Mighty Phrag — Part I

You've passed miles of it in roadside seeps, its feathery tops bent by the wind. But have you ever stepped inside a stand of the common reed *Phragmites australis*? It's humbling. The reed, which grows as tall as ten feet, completely dwarfs you; you feel like a bug in a meadow. And it threatens to engulf native wetland plants the same way.

Throughout Connecticut's swamps, ponds, fens, and salt marshes, *Phragmites* is becoming increasingly widespread. Where it gains dominance in a wetland, it can overtop and outcompete other plant species in a few years. Over the past decade, the Connecticut Chapter has supported ten research projects focused on determining if *Phragmites* displaces assemblages of native plants, and if so, how. This research is designed to ascertain how fast the reed is expanding in a variety of areas, including our preserves, and to identify environmental factors that promote its spread. The Conservancy also wants to know how wetland animals respond to this newcomer. Where *Phragmites* is demonstrably supplanting native species, the Conservancy is researching the most effective ways of removing the reed to encourage recovery of native species diversity.

How fast is *Phragmites* expanding?

One of the best ways to visualize the extent and spread of *Phragmites* in a wetland is to examine aerial photographs taken over a number of years. Round, tall clones of *Phragmites* are readily distinguishable in texture and color from the surrounding matrix of shorter, diverse, marsh vegetation.

A decade ago, researcher George Logan traced changes in *Phragmites* cover from 1934 to 1986 at six Connecticut wetlands of interest to The Nature Conservancy: three inland sites and three tidal sites. Logan's careful comparative work tells us the now ubiquitous *Phragmites* made its first appearance at most sites only after the mid-1960s, and expanded most readily in sites disturbed by activities (human or, in some cases, beaver) that have altered the soil profile or water table. Wesleyan student Stephanie Anagnoson carried these analyses five years further, demonstrating that expansion rates, while relatively constant in a given area

over time, vary widely among wetlands.

Supported by a grant from the Connecticut Chapter in 1994, Professor Scott Warren of Connecticut College quantified the spread of *Phragmites* in Nature Conservancy preserves at Lord Cove in Lyme, Great Island in Old Lyme, and other sites. In accord with the previous studies, Warren documented the first signs of *Phragmites* in the late 1960s. He calculated that the reed expands its coverage at rates of one to two percent of land area per year, and showed that soil salinity tends to depress expansion rates of the reed in coastal salt marshes relative to fresher, riverine wetlands.

With the advent of geographic information systems (GIS), it is now possible to scan and computer-digitize aerial photos rapidly, map the distribution of *Phragmites* precisely across broad areas, and investigate spatial correlations between reed dynamics and other ecological features of the landscape. In 1997, biologist Nels Barrett and GIS expert Sandy Prisloe teamed up to produce maps of *Phragmites* throughout the Tidelands region of the lower Connecticut River, rich with data and informative patterns.

These maps help the Conservancy home in on its adversary—but what effect is *Phragmites* having at these sites? Next issue, we'll examine the impact of *Phragmites*—and how it can be controlled. 

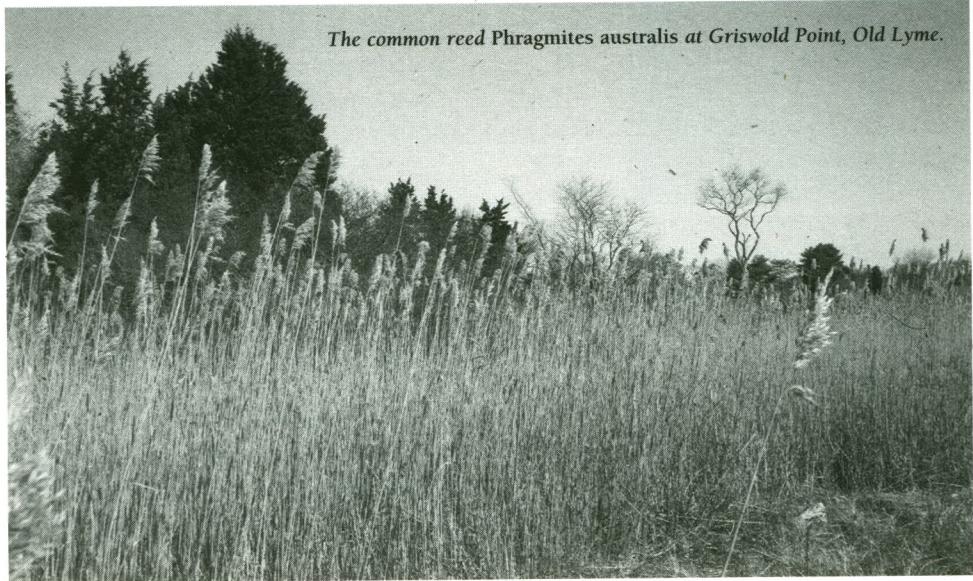
— DR. ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH

You can help!

Want to immerse yourself in your work, get muddy, get some exercise, and participate in a conservation success story first-hand? You can have fun, work hard, and help out with science at the Connecticut Chapter by joining our WeedMasters Program this summer. In past summers, volunteers have greatly aided us by keeping an eye on invasive species at several Conservancy preserves, monitoring and mapping stands of these opportunistic plants, participating in "weed"-removal work parties, and celebrating the positive impacts of our hard work on the organisms that depend on it.

We will conduct training on Saturday, May 16, for volunteers interested in becoming a WeedMaster in the Tidelands of the Connecticut River region. In a morning's session, we will teach you how to recognize the significant invasive species of Connecticut, introduce you to our scientific monitoring methods, and demonstrate hands-on removal techniques. You can then adopt a preserve at which you will weed-watch this summer. For more information on how to get involved in this innovative program, call Volunteer Coordinator Ann Colson at (860) 344-0716.

© John Mattiessen



The common reed Phragmites australis at Griswold Point, Old Lyme.

Frohling Named as Tidelands Director

Girdler Family Creates Internship Fund

In a generous gesture to memorialize the late Reynolds Girdler, his family has established an endowment fund in his name. This endowment will allow the chapter to provide training for the conservationists of tomorrow through student internships.

Barbara Girdler of Riverside, Reynolds Girdler Jr. of Old Greenwich, Lewis Girdler of Vermont and Allan Girdler of California have donated a total of \$69,000 toward the Reynolds Girdler Internship Endowment.

The chapter has a strong student internship program that generates valuable scientific data while giving students experience in field research. Although most chapter interns are unpaid volunteers, the ability also to offer paid internships will enable the chapter and its interns to make a commitment for an entire summer.

If you are interested in internship information or in contributing to the Reynolds Girdler Internship Endowment, please call the Connecticut Chapter at (860) 344-0716.

Sally Bowles Joins Chapter Board

The chapter is pleased to announce that Sally Bowles of Essex has joined its board of trustees. Since 1993, Bowles has served as president of the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation, and currently serves as an elected member of the Council on Foundations's National Committee for Family Foundations. Previously, she was consultant to the Rockefeller Foundation on its Global Environment Programs, and was executive director of the Committee for South African Development.

Nathan M. Frohling of Guilford has joined the staff of The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter as the Geoffrey C. Hughes Director of the Tidelands of the Connecticut River Program.

Frohling most recently served as executive director of SoundWaters, an environmental education organization headquartered in Stamford. Prior to that, he served as executive director of the Farmington River Watershed Association from 1987 to 1994. During that time, he was a leader in the effort to secure the protective federal Wild and Scenic River Designation for the river.

"The Connecticut River is one of America's great natural and historic treasures, and the opportunity to focus on it every day, and work with the many groups and individuals dedicated to protecting it, is the job of a lifetime," said Frohling.

Frohling received a master of Environmental Studies degree from the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, focusing on estuarine and forest ecology and watershed protection. He received his bachelor of science in marine engineering from the University of Michigan.

In March 1993, The Nature Conservancy designated the river's tidal region—the Tidelands of the Connecticut River—one of this hemisphere's Last Great Places. The Nature Conservancy is working to preserve the remaining outstanding ecosystems in the United States, Latin America and the Pacific while recognizing the needs of both people and nature through this initiative, Last Great Places: An Alliance for People and the Environment.

Many factors, including the tidal influence of the Atlantic Ocean and the geology of the area, have allowed the formation of a beautiful complex of salt, brackish and freshwater tidal marshes. Due in part to shifting sandbars in Long Island Sound, which impeded navigation by deep draft ships, the Connecticut River is the largest river in the northeast without a major city at its mouth.

The focus of the Tidelands program is to preserve the unique natural resources of the

© John Mattiesen



Nathan R. Frohling

lower Connecticut River and its tributaries, including the southern half of the river in Connecticut, as well as 78 miles of the lower river's major tributaries: the Duck, Black Hall, Lieutenant, Eightmile, Salmon and Mattabesset Rivers. Conservation efforts focus on the marsh systems and upland buffers and the many rare species that occur within this ecosystem. Even though these areas are much healthier now than in the past, they are still vulnerable. Threats include inappropriate habitat conversion and fragmentation, invasive species, reduction in water quality and physical barriers to water circulation.

In 1994, the program was guaranteed permanent staffing thanks to a \$1 million grant made by the Geoffrey C. Hughes Foundation, Inc. of New York City. This grant created the chapter's first endowed position, the Geoffrey C. Hughes Director of the Tidelands of the Connecticut River program. The position was held by Dr. Juliana Barrett until last year. The Geoffrey C. Hughes Foundation, Inc. was created through the will of the thoroughbred horse owner and breeder and environmentalist Geoffrey C. Hughes, who died in 1991. 

Myles H. Alderman joined the chapter staff in January as the corporate and foundation relations manager. Until recently Myles was the president and chief executive officer of H.M. Bullard Company, Inc. of Branford. A graduate of Yale, he has been very active in the not-for-profit world working with various organizations, including Yale University, the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, and New Haven Urban Resources Initiative, Inc.



Charles T. Clark joined the chapter staff in March as major gifts officer. Most recently he was a senior development officer for The Yale Campaign at Yale University. Charlie previously served as guest curator and director of development for the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme. His statewide experience includes work for the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation from 1982 to 1987. A native of Weston, he has been a member of the Connecticut Chapter since 1976.



Nicole Martinez came to the Connecticut Chapter in November as science and stewardship administrative assistant, bringing with her four years of experience with the Conservancy as both a volunteer and seasonal employee. She worked as a preserve manager for the Rhode Island Field Office and as a piping plover and least tern steward for the South Fork & Shelter Island Chapter in New York. Nicole has also worked on Sanibel Island, Florida, promoting the use of native flora and researching gopher tortoises.



Betty McLaughlin joined the chapter staff in January as program

coordinator for the Land Trust Service Bureau and for the Land Conservation Coalition of Connecticut. Previously, she served as executive director and legislative liaison for the Sierra Club in Connecticut. She has also worked as director of environmental affairs at the Connecticut Audubon Society, director of the Connecticut office of the Regional Plan Association, and executive director of the Farmington River Watershed.



VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Weaving, gardening, grandchildren, and travel are just a few of the pleasures in Helen Kuzina's busy life, and in between them all she still finds time to volunteer.

Following her retirement in 1992 from a teaching career that spanned more than three decades, Helen became a library volunteer at Middletown's Snow School, bringing a wealth of experience with her.

"It's critical to introduce children to reading for pleasure as well as for information while they're young," Helen said, reflecting on her years of working with first and second graders. "Unfortunately, school libraries often are not a high priority, and don't have enough help to do sufficiently what needs to be done, so I'm happy to give my time."

She also has found time for the rewarding art of weaving,

which she learned and is perfecting through classes she takes at Wesleyan Potters. Helen prefers using cotton or chenille yarns for the intricate scarves and table runners she creates for family and friends. She enjoys experimenting with natural dyes, and uses the earthy hues derived from plants like pokeweed, sumac and marigold to blend unique colorations throughout her weaving.

It was Helen's love of nature and commitment to the environment that brought her to the Conservancy last spring. She cheerfully volunteers her time—two half-days a month—to assist with the important and always monumental task of membership mailings at the Connecticut Chapter office.

Besides helping in the office, Helen pitches in at preserve work parties and is one of 65 dedicated chapter volunteers who participate each winter in



the Bald Eagle Observation Program at Shepaug Dam in Southbury.

"Nature is so worthwhile," Helen said. "If we don't take care of it it's not going to be there for our children and grandchildren."

— ANN COLSON

Goodbye, Vu!

Vunay Talbot, chapter membership assistant since April 1995, left in February to enter culinary school. She leaves a solid record of hard work in the membership services area.

We wish Vunay the best of luck in her new career!



All events are free, but registration is required. Please, no pets.

- For events at Devils Den and Katharine Ordway Preserves, please call (203) 226-4991.
- For events at Sunny Valley Preserve, please call (860) 355-3716.

Friday, May 1, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Amphibian Search for Kids at The Den. Sue Roth will help six-to-nine-year-olds search for amphibians. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Bring a flashlight and waterproof footwear. Co-leader: Cia Marion.

Friday, May 1, 7:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Amphibian Search at The Den. Sue Roth will introduce later-emerging frogs and salamanders on this nocturnal search. Minimum age is ten. Bring a flashlight, magnifying lens, and waterproof footwear. Co-leader: Cia Marion.

Saturday, May 2, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Search for Vernal Pools at The Den. During a walk to search for these ephemeral wetlands, Dr. Nelson Gelfman will discuss the importance of vernal pools, their place in the food chain, the creatures that live in them, and how to identify these areas, which are vital to amphibians and insects. Minimum age is eight.

Sunday, May 3, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Spring Beauties at The Den. Greg Waters, horticulturist at the Weir Farm National Historic Site on the Ridgefield/Wilton border, will discuss wildflowers, shrubs, trees, and their habitats. Learn about native species from an expert.

Saturday, May 9, 6:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. Spring Migrants at Katharine Ordway Preserve. Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day with Den ornithologist Dr. Lise Hanners on a search for a variety of songbirds on their way to northern nesting sites. Bring binoculars and a bird book.

Saturday, May 9, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Workday at The Den. Volunteers will focus on different aspects of trail maintenance.

Sunday, May 10, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Family Nature Walk at the Den. Celebrate Mother's Day and spring with the mother-and-son team of Natural History Guides Cia and Jamie Marion.

Sunday, May 17, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saugatuck Valley Trails Day Hike. Carpooling to the start at The Den, hikers will walk eight to ten miles north on trails by craggy rocks, hemlocks, brooks, waterfalls, and overlooks. Bring water, lunch, and a camera on this moderately strenuous hike led by Jonathan Brochstein, Len Horowitz, and Cia Marion. Call The Den Office for directions.

Sunday, May 17, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Spring Wildflowers at the Katharine Ordway Preserve. Julia and Frank Conway and Helene Weatherill will identify early wood and field wildflowers.

Tuesday, May 19, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Adult Hike at Katharine Ordway Preserve. Mary Callahan and Annette Sandstrom will lead this walk to check on springtime wildflowers and other emerging features at the preserve.

Monday, May 25, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Easy Four-Mile Hike. Traversing easy terrain at the Stormfield Natural Area in Redding, hikers will learn about an interesting network of trails named after characters from Mark Twain's "Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven" on this hike of about four miles. Bring water and a snack. Call The Den Office for meeting directions. Leaders: Marci Kendall and Jane and Jere Ross.

Sunday, May 31, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Five-Mile Hike. Amy Beebe, Charlie Gereg, and Peg Peterson will lead this loop hike from the reservoir to the great ledges, Den, and back. Bring water and a snack. Call The Den Office for meeting directions.

Saturday June 6, 6:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. Birding by Ear at The Den. Learn to identify birds by their songs and calls. The leaves of the forest may make birds a challenge to spot, but Den Director Dr. Lise Hanners will teach some pointers. Bring binoculars and a bird book.

Saturday, June 6, 9 a.m. to noon. Workday at The Den. This group session will prepare preserve trails for summer visitors.

Saturday, June 6. Photos of the Lower Connecticut River Valley by Joe Standart
exhibited at Cooley Gallery, Old Lyme, (860) 434-8807. Through July 3.

Saturday, June 6, 9:30 a.m. to noon. Hike the Sunny Valley Blue Trail in Bridgewater. Four mile moderate hike covers the preserve's primary trail. North-south route skirts the banks of Lake Lillinonah before moving inland through diverse woodlands.

Sunday, June 7, 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Ravines and Rivers. This hike of approximately ten miles will feature lots of dramatic scenery—carved cliffs, cool evergreens, rocky streams, and reservoir views—along the Saugatuck Valley Trails system, with lunch at the Great Ledge. Hikers will meet at The Den and carpool to the start in Redding. Leaders are Jonathan Brochstein, Ann Maio, and Heather Seymour.

Sunday, June 7, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Stream and Pond Life at The Den. Using nets and pans, participants will investigate life in Den waterways. Minimum age is six. Bring a magnifying lens and waterproof footwear. Leader: Sue Roth.

Tuesday, June 9, 8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Nature Photography with Alison Wachstein. The first session in this three-part series for adults will take place in the photographer's home studio, where she will give a slide presentation and basic camera instruction on composition, lighting, and exposure in photographing nature and the figure in the landscape. Limit: 20 participants. Beginning photographers welcome. See also June 14 and 23.

Sunday June 14, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Tree Identification Walk at Katharine Ordway Preserve. Arborist and Preserve Manager Fred Moore will talk about the trees and magnificent flowering laurel in the woods of this former estate. Minimum age is ten.

Sunday, June 14, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Nature Photography Walk with Alison Wachstein at The Den. In part two of this series for adults, Alison Wachstein will answer camera questions as photographers film subjects on location at The Den. See also June 23.

Monday, June 15, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Adult Hike at The Den. Come see The Den's abundant laurel in full bloom on this hike of about three miles. Leaders: Mary Callahan and Carol Kane.

Sunday, June 21, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Rambler to Ambler at The Den. Celebrate Father's Day at the height of the laurel season with this three-mile, moderately strenuous hike that will parallel the Saugatuck River and climb some of the more narrow and rugged trails through Ambler Gorge to view stream and waterfall. Leaders: Amy Beebe, Cia Marion, and Heather Seymour.

Tuesday, June 23, 8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Nature Photography with Alison Wachstein. For the last session of the series, photographers return to the artist's studio to display the photographs taken at The Den and discuss ways to improve them during a shared, informal, and positive critique.

Sunday, June 28, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saugatuck Valley Trails Day Hike. Hike eight to ten miles along reservoir trails, with lunch at the Great Ledge overlooking the river valley, with Bill Lyon from the Bridgeport Hydraulic Company and Den Natural History Guides Ann Maio and Heather Seymour. Learn about local history and how Bridgeport Hydraulic manages its watershed lands. Bring water, lunch, and a camera. Call The Den Office for meeting directions.

Sunday, June 28, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Family Nature Walk at The Den. Celebrate the beginning of summer vacation with Leaders Jackie and Dick Troxell.

Saturday, July 11, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Ferns at The Den. Varied, hardy, and attractive, ferns are popular additions to the landscape. Sue Roth will identify basic ferns and discuss their intriguing methods of reproduction. Bring a magnifying lens and fern book.

Monday, July 13, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Adult Hike at The Den. The trees of the preserve should cool hikers on this walk with Harvey Franzel and Helene Weatherill.

Saturday, July 18, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Family Nature Walk at The Den. Enjoy an inviting stroll by streams and pond with Leaders Dorothy Abrams and Dr. Benjamin Oko.

Saturday, July 25, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Insect Ecology at The Den. Entomologist Dr. Henry Knizeski will teach the basics of insect identification and talk about the biology of these varied and abundant creatures. Bring a magnifying lens.

Sunday, July 26, 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.. Beat the Heat at The Den. Taking advantage of a breezy high point and the cooling views of Godfrey Pond, this early-morning hike of less than four miles should highlight the best of summer. Leaders: Charlie Gereg and Peg Peterson.

Saturday, Aug. 1, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 A.M.
Thanks to Our Shade Trees at The Den. As they walk the trails, Leaders Mary Callahan and Len Horowitz will discuss The Den's shady friends and all the positive things they do for us.

Saturday, Aug. 8, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Family Scavenger Hunt at The Den. Children five and up and their parents search for certain forest features. Leaders: Julie Bliss, Greg Izzo, and Elyse Sashin.

Tuesday, Aug. 11, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Adult Hike at The Den. Participants can see what summer's like in the deep woods of the preserve. Leaders: Dorothy Abrams and Harvey Franzel.

Saturday, Aug. 15, 10 a.m. to noon.
Butterflies at Katharine Ordway Preserve. Lepidopterist Vic DeMasi will identify summer butterflies and moths, as well as the habitats and foods that will attract them to one's property. Bring a magnifying lens, binoculars, and a butterfly book.

Saturday, Aug. 22, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Family Nature Walk at The Den. Investigate the wildlife at home at The Den this summer. Leaders: Amy Beebe and Elyse Sashin.

Saturday, Aug. 29, 10:30 a.m. to noon.
Pondside Dragonfly Search. Dragonfly enthusiast and Chapter Volunteer Coordinator Ann Colson will lead a walk around Cemetary Pond in Bridgewater. Please bring lunch for a picnic afterward. Please register at Sunny Valley Preserve, (860) 355-3716.

Sunday, Aug. 30, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. or 1 p.m.
Beat the Heat at The Den. A cool, early-morning walk of about three miles beside a river in the woods will refresh every hiker. Those interested in adding two to three additional miles can participate in an extended guided tour at the end of the first session. Bring water and lunch. Leaders: Meg Forbes, Greg Izzo, and Ann Maio.

Mark your calendars for Open Farm Day, Saturday, Oct. 10 at Sunny Valley Preserve in New Milford.

Take a Walk in the Woods With Us

Are you an amateur naturalist? Do you enjoy tramping in the woods? Do you interact well with a variety of people? Great! If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you may be interested in becoming a volunteer field trip assistant this summer.

We're seeking qualified people to act as "sweeps" and generally assist chapter staff with our popular natural history walks. A commitment to participate in at least two walks per field season is required. For more information, please call Volunteer Coordinator Ann Colson at (860) 344-0716.



1998 NATURAL HISTORY WALKS PROGRAM

The chapter invites you to explore some of the most beautiful wild places in Connecticut with us. The chapter's Natural History Walks are fun and informative—geared toward providing a learning experience and an opportunity to discover great places to walk or to paddle. You will learn about natural history and the ecology of a number of sites, including the chapter's Tidelands of the Connecticut River, one of the Last Great Places.

For information and to register, call the chapter office at (860) 344-0716. Because we wish to provide a high quality experience, participation is limited, and reservations are required. Please be considerate; if you must cancel, give us a call so that individuals on a waiting list can be contacted. A map and other information will be mailed to you shortly before the walk. We will go rain or shine! Please, no pets.

Thursday, May 14, 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. **Spring Migrants at Burnham Brook Preserve, East Haddam**

Expect to see a variety of bird species as they wing their way north in the vernal sky. Artist and conservationist Rob Braunfield, who will lead the hike, initiated a bluebird nest-box project in Lyme and East Haddam. Since 1983, more than 2,000 baby bluebirds have fledged from 70 nest boxes. A dozen of these boxes are on the preserve, and Rob anticipates that participants will be able to see nesting bluebirds from several vantage points.

Sunday, May 17, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Birding in the Northwest Highlands, Salisbury**

Limited to 10
Join Northwest Highlands Project Manager and expert birder Chris Wood on a birding adventure in Connecticut's scenic northwest corner. You can expect to see more than 100 species of birds in one of the state's busiest bird migration corridors. Chris has more than 20 years' birding experience, and chaired the state Geological & Natural History Survey's "Atlas of Breeding Birds in Connecticut" project. Bring a lunch, binoculars, field guides and a spotting scope if you have one. Some birding experience recommended. Ask about car pooling when you register.

Sunday, June 7, 10 a.m. to noon **Grassland Birds at Hollenbeck Preserve, Canaan**

Limited to 20
Please join Northwest Highlands Project Manager Chris Wood for an excursion in the northwest highlands of Connecticut. This exemplary and highly diverse calcareous forested swamp is a patchwork of micro-habitats and presents an intriguing array of unique species. Open fields replete with birds, forested swamp and a meandering river add to its beauty. The terrain is flat and the walking is easy.

Friday, June 26, time to be determined by tides **Tidelands Canoeing, Great Island Marshes, Old Lyme**

Limited to 10 boats
Come explore this unique and beautiful area with Judy Preston, director of Science and Stewardship, and Nathan Frohling, the chapter's new Geoffrey C. Hughes director of the Tidelands of the Connecticut River program. We will talk about what makes this such a dynamic area: from nesting plovers to a wide variety of vegetation (both native and non-native); threats to the marshes; and stewardship of this most precious resource. Note: Participants must provide his/her own canoe/kayak and a personal flotation device for each passenger.



All work parties are held rain or shine, although severe weather may cancel them. Please register at least two weeks in advance by calling Volunteer Coordinator Ann Colson at (860) 344-0716, unless otherwise noted below. We need your name and telephone number in the event we have to change or cancel a date, and your address so we can mail site directions and additional details.

Falkner Island, Guilford, Saturday & Sunday, May 2 & 3, time to be determined Physical Activity: Moderate

Travel by boat to this off-shore island! Home to a nesting colony of federally endangered roseate terns (*Sterna dougallii*), it is managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as part of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge. We will prepare artificial nesting structures made from old tires. Sign up early—access is by boat only, and space is limited. The roseate terns will not be present this early in the season, but this is an interesting project and Falkner Island is a great place to see; except for this annual work party, the refuge is rarely open to the public. Details and directions will be mailed to participants approximately two weeks beforehand.

Great Pond, Glastonbury, Saturday, May 9, 8:30 a.m. - noon

Physical Activity: Moderately strenuous
Spring clean-up for this preserve will occur during the height of spring bird migration. Great Pond is a glacial draw-down pond; its continually fluctuating water levels create conditions that only a handful of plant species can tolerate. We will be maintaining an existing trail system and focusing on the removal of some non-native invasive species (barberry and honeysuckle). The walking is not difficult. Please bring a shovel or hazelhoe to get invasive plants out by their roots, and hand-held or lopping shears. Saturday, May 16, is the rain date; contact Bill Reed, Great Pond Committee chairman, at (860) 633-1674 to register and for up-to-date information.

Least Tern/Piping Plover Monitor Training, Saturday, May 9, 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Painter Park, West Haven
In cooperation with the state Department of Environmental Protection, the Connecticut Chapter trains and coordinates volunteers to assist with the protection of two species of endangered shorebirds, the piping plover and least tern. Volunteer monitors patrol known habitat sites at three Connecticut beaches from early May through August 2, reminding visitors to respect the fenced and posted bird-nesting areas.

WeedMaster Training, Saturday, May 16, 9 a.m. to noon

Chapman Pond Preserve, East Haddam

Physical Activity: Moderately strenuous

You and your family or friends can adopt a preserve this summer and become WeedMasters for The Nature Conservancy! This training session is for volunteers who would like to help us in the ongoing battle against non-native, invasive species on our Tidelands of the Connecticut River preserves. We will teach you to recognize invasive species, introduce scientific monitoring methods, and demonstrate hands-on removal techniques. Participants will be able to choose from a list of high priority Tidelands preserves and become the official WeedMasters for one or more sites that are convenient to where they live.

Sunny Valley Preserve, Bridgewater, Saturday, June 6, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. **Physical Activity: Strenuous**

We've chosen National Trails Day for this work party, where we'll be tackling maintenance and reconstruction chores on 10 miles of the Sunny Valley trail system in Bridgewater. Preserve Manager Wayne Woodard needs a hardworking volunteer crew to build waterbars and stone steps, and to assist with other erosion control techniques. If time permits we will also clear vegetation from the trails and remove invasive species such as barberry and bittersweet. Work gloves and heavy shoes are required for this work party — no sneakers, sandals, or other lightweight shoes, please! A limited number of tools will be available, so please bring your own if you have them (hammer, shovel, saw, pick mattock, etc.). Bring lunch and a beverage; we will provide snacks! Please call the chapter office at (860) 344-0716, or Sunny Valley Preserve, (860) 355-3716, to register.

Carolie Evans Recognized

James A. Brunton Jr., president of the Pajaro Jai Foundation in Westport, will donate a bench for the lookout area at the Selden Creek Preserve in Lyme in honor of Carolie Evans, the chapter's director of land protection from 1984 to 1996.



Brunton will donate a bench hand-made out of ironwood by the Choco people, who are indigenous to the Darien region of Panama. Among other activities, the Pajaro Jai Foundation raises money to protect the Panamanian forest by selling wood products of this kind. The furniture is made in La Palma, Panama, using wood harvested locally with non-traumatic extraction techniques. Among the goals of the foundation is to

provide a local market for tree farms, and an alternative to slash and burn agriculture. The bench the foundation is donating is worth approximately \$800.

During Carolie Evans' dozen years as director of land protection, the chapter protected more than 3,500 acres through ownership and 2,600 through conservation easements.



Art Rocque Named DEP Commissioner

Arthur J. Rocque Jr., a 25-year veteran of the Department of Environmental Protection who is also a member of the chapter's Legacy Club, has been elevated to the top position at the agency. The move came after Sidney Holbrook, the commissioner since 1995, was appointed co-chief of staff for Governor Rowland.

Previously, Rocque served as assistant commissioner for Air, Waste and Water Programs and as assistant commissioner for the Office of Long Island Sound Programs. Over several years in charge of the Coastal Management Programs, Rocque developed a national reputation for his expertise on coastal issues.

Rocque, whose undergraduate work was in engineering and graduate work was in mathematics, started his tenure with the then-new department in 1972.

— DAVID SUTHERLAND

Chapter Opens Salisbury Office

The chapter has opened a new office in Salisbury that will serve as a base of operations for its conservation efforts in Connecticut's northwest corner. This part of the state is a conservation priority for the chapter, which has been increasing its activities in the region. The chapter thanks Former Chapter Trustee Dr. Mary Alice White for making the office available at an affordable rate.

Although the office will not be staffed full time, Sunny Valley Preserve Director Christopher S. Wood, who is coordinating the chapter's work in the region, will open doors on a regular basis. The office is at 24 Main Street, and can be reached at (860) 435-2854.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

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From the Land

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We all know how rumors spread. The truth is The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter can turn your gift of real estate into wildlife habitat. Houses, condominiums, and raw lands are examples of real estate donated.

The Conservancy will sell the property and use the proceeds to help save natural areas. What's more, you may also receive a charitable income tax deduction.

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Note: Minimum gift of \$15,000. Consult your financial advisor about a potential gift.

**Did you hear?
We're moving
to a condo!**



John A. Blum

The Nature Conservancy offers its sympathy to the family of John A. Blum of Colebrook, who died in February at the age of 82. A former chapter trustee and treasurer, Blum and his wife, Nancy Phelps Blum, donated the 396-acre Phelps Research Area in Colebrook to the Connecticut Chapter. The Blums were co-founders of the Colebrook Land Conservancy.



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